



Washington, D.C. 20505

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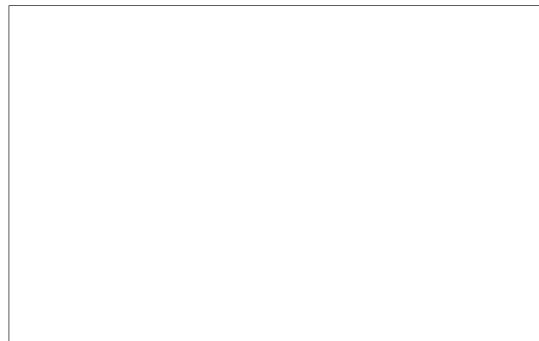
## Directorate of Intelligence

January 12, 1988

Western Europe: Attitudes Toward Defense in a Post-INF World<sup>1</sup>Summary

West Europeans prefer that the United States and the Soviet Union give priority to negotiations to reduce strategic nuclear weapons than to achieving reductions in conventional forces as a follow-up to the INF treaty, according to USIA opinion polls. They believe Soviet forces are in Eastern Europe primarily to control their allies and defend the Soviet Union rather than to intimidate or threaten the West, and are not very concerned about the conventional force imbalance. West Europeans do believe that Moscow and its allies present a potential threat to the West, but not an immediate military threat. [redacted]

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<sup>1</sup> This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] Office of European Analysis. Questions and comments are welcome and may be addressed to Chief, Issues and Applications Division [redacted]

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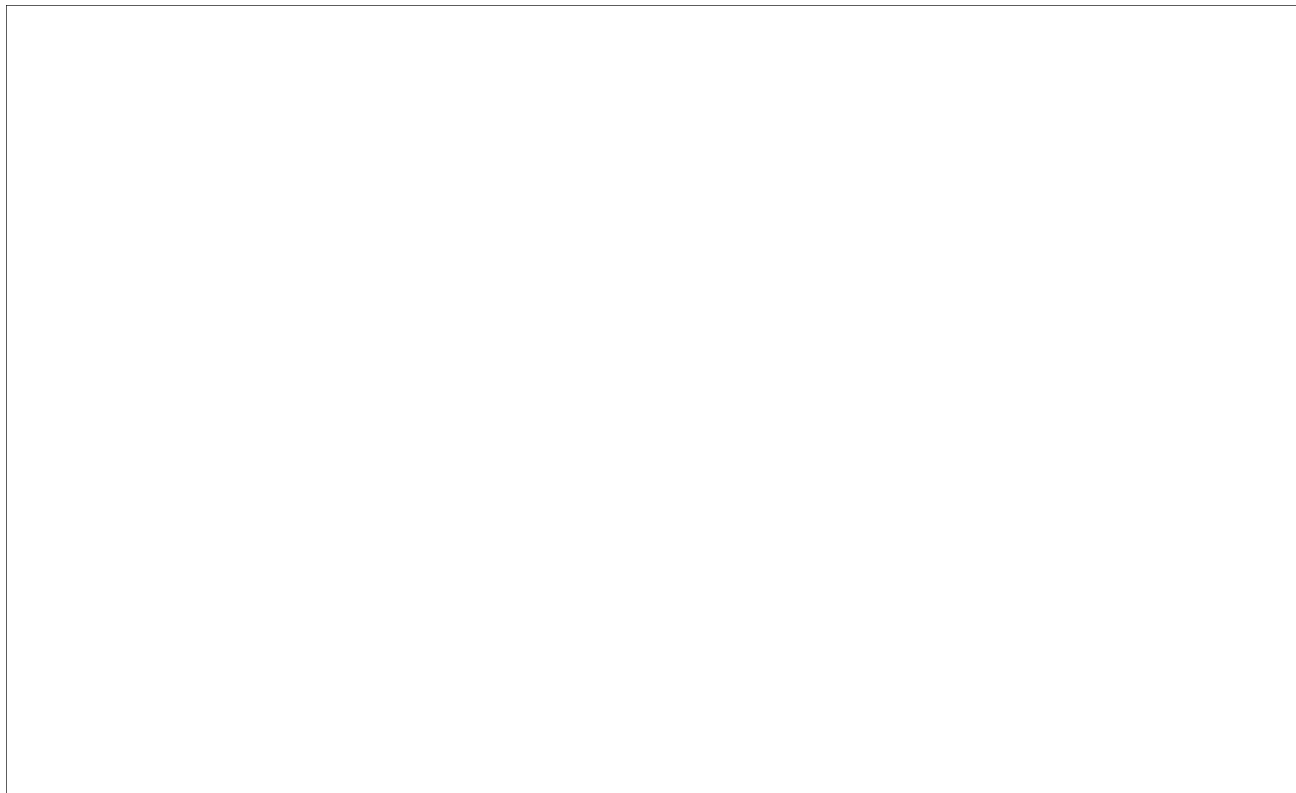
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### Perspectives on Conventional Forces and Nuclear Weapons

West Europeans take a relatively relaxed view of the Soviet conventional threat, and many do not even believe that the USSR enjoys conventional superiority. Most Italians with an opinion-63 percent of those surveyed-think that NATO has stronger conventional forces, although pluralities in France and West Germany, and a majority in Britain believe the Warsaw Pact has stronger conventional forces. Majorities in all countries think Soviet forces are in Eastern Europe for defensive reasons or to keep a tight rein on their East European allies, rather than to threaten or intimidate the West (see table 2). [REDACTED]

West Europeans are largely ignorant of the nuclear forces the United States and the Soviet Union actually possess, despite their strong interest in nuclear arms control. For example, according to the September 1987 USIA poll, no more than one in five or fewer in West Germany, Italy, and Britain claim to have heard a fair amount or a great deal about the Soviet Union's new SS-24. The French may be better informed, about one-third claim to know something about the Soviet missile. [REDACTED]



Although ignorance of a specific weapon may be understandable, West Europeans also are generally unaware of US nuclear deployments in Europe. Only about 40 percent of British, French, and West German respondents know the United States has non-INF nuclear weapons stationed in Western Europe, according to a May 1987 USIA poll (see table 3). Of the remainder, most simply do not know whether the US has non-INF nuclear weapons in Europe, although a few are convinced the United States has no other nuclear weapons. [ ]

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### The Soviet Threat

When asked in the September poll to identify which countries pose a military threat to their nation, a plurality of West Germans and Britons identified 'the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.' Only about a quarter of the French named the Soviets, roughly half as many as named Middle Eastern countries (see table 4). When asked in October 1986 and May 1987 whether the Soviet Union presented a long-term threat to the security of their country, a plurality of the French and about 45 percent of the British agreed, but a majority of West Germans said no. However, when asked whether the Soviet Union is likely to attack Western Europe in the next five years, most French, Italian, and British respondents-along with West Germans-have historically said no (see table 5). [ ] -

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### Implications

The reluctance of most West Europeans to acknowledge that Soviet conventional forces pose a significant threat to them suggests that it will be difficult for Western public diplomacy to highlight Warsaw Pact/NATO conventional force imbalances. In our judgment, unless the terms of the debate can be changed, even a convincing demonstration of Soviet conventional superiority would be without significance in the face of the widespread disinclination to accept the reality of a Soviet conventional threat. West European public concern with nuclear weapons will likely put increasing pressure on West European governments to give priority to reductions in the US and Soviet nuclear weapons remaining in Europe. This is especially likely to occur in countries like Italy and West Germany which do not have national nuclear forces. [ ]

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TABLE 1: Follow-On Negotiations  
(percent of respondents)

Question: After an agreement is reached on the elimination of intermediate range nuclear missiles, which of the following agreements between the Soviet Union and the United States do you think would contribute the most to the peace and security of Europe?

	France 9/87 -----	Germany 9/87 -----	Italy 9/87 -----	Britain 9/87 -----
An agreement to make substantial reductions in their strategic nuclear weapons	39	51	57	54
An agreement to withdraw a substantial portion of their conventional forces from Central Europe	24	26	26	28
Don't know	38	23	17	18
	--- 101	--- 100	--- 100	--- 100

Source: United States Information Agency

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TABLE 2: Reasons for Soviet Military Presence  
(percent of respondents)

Question: As you probably know, the Soviet Union has a substantial military force stationed in the countries of East Europe. On this card are several reasons others have given to explain why the Soviet union maintains these forces in Eastern Europe. Please tell me which one reason you think is most correct.

	France 9/87	Germany 9/87	Italy 9/87	Britain 9/87
	-----	-----	-----	-----
The Soviet Union wants eventually to dominate the countries of Western Europe	9	15	10	12
The Soviet Union wants to intimidate the countries of Western Europe into adopting policies which are favorable to the Soviet Union	14	14	16	13
The Soviet Union wants to keep tight control over its East European allies	32	36	39	38
The Soviet Union wants to prevent an attack on its own territory	22	17	28	32
Don't know	23	22	7	6
	---	---	---	---
	100	104	100	101

Source: United States Information Agency

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TABLE 3: Does the US Have Any Non-INF Nuclear Weapons in Europe?  
(percent of respondents)

Question: So far as you know, if all American intermediate range missiles in Europe are eliminated, will the US have any other nuclear weapons stationed in Western Europe with which to defend its allies?

	France 5/87	Germany 5/87	Britain 5/87
	-----	-----	-----
US has other nuclear weapons	40	37	44
US does <u>not</u> have other nuclear weapons	14	13	15
Don't know	46	50	41
	---	---	---
	100	100	100

Source: United States Information Agency

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TABLE 4: Which Countries Pose a Military Threat?  
(percent of respondents)

Question: In your view, which country or countries, if any, pose a military threat to the security of (survey country)? (open-ended)

	France 9/87	Germany 9/87	Britain 9/87
	-----	-----	-----
USSR and East Europe	27	50	41
Middle East/Arab Cos./Iran	54	6	38
USA	5	3	11
Others	11	7	14
No country	15	28	22
Don't know	18	17	11

Source: United States Information Agency

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TABLE 5: Will the Soviets Attack?  
(percent of respondents)

Question: How concerned are you that the Soviet Union will attack Western Europe within the next five years?

	France				Germany			
	7/81	4/82	5/84	12/85	7/81	4/82	5/84	12/85
Yes	16	29	na	29	9	14	7	16
No	66	61	na	57	77	70	84	71
Don't know	21	9	na	14	14	17	8	13
	103	99	na	100	100	101	99	100

	Italy				Britain			
	7/81	4/82	5/84	12/85	7/81	4/82	5/84	12/85
Yes	21	23	17	7	17	22	52	28
No	70	69	76	83	73	68	46	60
Don't know	9	9	7	9	10	10	3	11
	100	101	100	99	100	100	101	99

Source: United States Information Agency

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